Of Blood and Red Strings

By: NeonFlower

(AU) When Nui Harime survives the genocidal attempt to the world, she feels like she's a completely different person. Facing the ultimate prosecution of death for her actions, the two people she previously despised the most come to help her. Will they be able to tell if she's truly changed? Or will Nui snap back to her old self?

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Prologue

Darkness swelled in her being when mother destroyed her heart. The heart that kept them both alive. For second, as if a white light had flashed before her vision, she felt a tinge of *something.* As if mother hadn't even thought of her life when the heart was crushed under her grip.

Was it regret?

Disbelief?

Had they even succeeded?

She didn't know. She could only sense darkness, and a powerful ache swell in her body.

Did she even have a body anymore?

Was she… even alive?

That thought was proven right when all her senses came to her suddenly. The air was thick with smoke and dust, she knew. Her lungs burned and her head ached. But something new swelled in her heart. A new feeling she had never felt.

She wanted to cry.

But her body prevented her from doing so. Her throat was clogged with tears, but alas, they could never surface her eyes. She felt freedom in a sense, in a way she had never felt.

That blood thirst she always longed for was gone. Disappeared from her soul. She did not crave blood anymore, to see the gruesome sight of somebody dying in her hands, the sight that she saw most beautiful.

The faint sound of an explosion awakened her senses. Her sight was disabled, but her hearing felt much stronger. Oh how badly she wanted to see, to look upon the earth she was laying on. She craved to see, but it was failing her right now.

But yet, she wasn't annoyed, frustrated with the body she was born with. She felt at ease, even if she felt weak and tired.

"There's a girl over here!" Her heart raced with panic when she heard a voice. Yet she could not move. It was as if the life-fibers in her body were frozen and refused to warm up.

She could not see.

She could not move.

She could only hear.

"Isn't that-?!"

"I believe it is!"

"Quick! Handcuff her before she awakens!" Another moment of silence fell as she heard the clanking of heavy boots grow louder and louder.

"Sir… we can't,"

"My god…" She heard shock in the man's voice. It was that moment that she came to realize something. The life fibers, the red threads that ran throughout her body, were either dormant or gone completely. Which meant…

… She had no arms.

"Let's just carry her to the truck. We'll alarm the student council. Maybe they can figure her punishment," The man spoke, before she felt hands grab her torso and legs. She wanted to scream and kick them away, but her body was still paralyzed…

Soon enough, she hit cold floor, and finally was released of her frozen state. Her one good eye snapped open as she panted. She was against a wall, two shadows overlooking her form.

"We're just going to keep you in here until further instruction," One shadow spoke, the other one nodding in agreement. They turned and started to walk out which caused her heart to lurch.

"H-Hey! Get back here!" She tried to shout, but her voice betrayed her. Instead, it came out as high-pitched squeaks. Both figures turned to her, but chuckled and left her in the empty room. Once the heavy door closed, she was left with a dim light from the ceiling. The floor and wall were cold, and without her arms, she couldn't conserve body heat. Her long, golden hair served as some cushion to the wall, but it still wasn't much.

She brought her legs up to her chest, starting to shiver.

Why did she feel this way?

She no longer felt that trance, that devious streak that coursed through her veins.

Was it because mother was dead?

Was she… free?

Was Nui free from her heartless soul?

The prologue to my second novel is now up! As you can tell, it's from Kill la Kill. Hope this run comes out good! Like always, Favorite, Follow, or Review!

PS: Also, I'd like to warn those that there's a good chance of OOC-ness on Nui's part. I'll do my best to give her some of her

old personality, but for the sake of this story, she's most likely going to be de-characterized. I apologize in advance.

Chapter 2

It had to be a day since she was locked away in that small, cold cell. Food and water were provided, but she refused to take it. The guards assigned to her door obliged to her request. She was surprised, if not a little shocked that she hadn't froze to death. Maybe it was because of the life fibers. She could not die unless they were severed.

In that quiet cell, she came to discover that she still had a heart. Once thought to be fused with mothers, she could feel it beating in her chest.

Now, she huddled against the wall, her temple pressed against the cold surface. Faint vibrations could be felt, which made her curious on the busy outside world. Honnoji Academy must've been in ruins because of her and mothers attempts at genocide. In a strange way, these vibrations made her sleepy, her one eye starting to grow heavy as she tuned in and out of consciousness.

Eventually, she fell asleep against that cold wall.

Above, unbeknownst to her, two pairs of eyes watched her closely. One stare was sharp, the other was cold.

"How long do we plan to keep her in here?" The shorter figure turned to the taller one, their eyes never losing that coldness to them.

"Until construction is complete," She replied, never taking her eyes off Nui. The shorter figure scoffed and turned back to their prisoner below, her eyes narrowing as she stared at the blonde. A tinge of utmost hatred coursed through her veins. Here she thought their father's murderer was dead, gone with their bitch of a mother.

But no.

She had lived.

"Ryuko, no matter how much you glare at her, you're not going to burn holes into her skin," The taller figure spoke out, having sensed her sister's tense aura.

"Why does she have to live though?! I thought we had defeated them, killed them off from this world! We did all this work, all this fighting and for *nothing?!* I lost a close friend and a father because of this battle, sis! I can't forgive her!" Ryuko immediately snapped, her voice starting to crack and waver. The older sibling watched her break down, saying nothing for a few minutes.

"It might be true that *we* lost a good few people to this war, but we triumphed in the end-"

"Then why the fuck is she still alive?!" Ryuko cut her off, pointing to the cell. Her eyes were glazed over now, tears starting to surface. The older sibling let out a sigh, closing her eyes. She knew that her sister was under pressure right now. Winning this war meant losing a good friend. It was clear that she was still suffering from his loss.

"Go," She finally spoke. Ryuko perked up, confusion etching her features.

"W-Wha-"

"It is very clear to me that you need some fresh air. It's probably best if you go meet up with Makanshoku. She might be able to cheer you up," She replied, and Ryuko dipped her head, her bangs hiding her eyes. Another few moments of silence followed.

"… Alright," Ryuko finally said, and stepped past her. The door closed with her departure, leaving her alone. She stood there, looking at Nui for a few more minutes before finally coming to a decision.

Turning, her heels clicked against the floor as she exited the small room.

Greeting the guards at Nui's cell door, they let her pass without hesitation, curious as to what was in their leader's arms. Entering the cell, Nui did not wake, even with the loud clicking of her heels. Coming upon her, she gazed down at the sleeping form of the blonde, finding it hard to believe that this weak figure was one of her toughest enemies not days before.

Shaking her head, she took the item draped over her arm and unfolded it. She leaned down, wrapping the blanket around the blonde's body. Against her better judgment, she was being merciful with the former Grand Couturier. She rose back up, and turned, exiting the cell without looking back…

Nui woke up, feeling much warmer than before. She came to realize that a blanket had been draped on her body, tightly fitted to not fall from her armless shoulders. Her eye softened, shifting into the fabric with a small smile. Her eye started to shut again, but not without the quiet thanks.

"Thank you, Satsuki,"

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Chapter 3

A few more days had passed since Nui was captured. After many meetings with the student council members, it had come to a final decision that Nui be fully prosecuted to the law. She would face death for her actions of murder.

Satsuki stood in the small room above her cell, watching her closely. She was awake, but silent and still. The Student Council President found something odd from the former Grand Couturier over the past few days. Knowing her personally, Satsuki would've thought that Nui would try to escape. Even without the use of her arms, Nui still had the capability to do unspeakable acts of violence.

Yet, here she was, mostly still and not even attempting to move.

Had the fusion with Raygo weaken her?

Was she… perhaps… free?

Satsuki could never entitle herself as *'free'* . The psychological damage alone was so deep into her skin, the scars would never fade. Her little sister was unaware of their mother's brutal nature, having been saved by their father. She was granted as fortunate.

The more Satsuki thought about it, the more she came to realize that maybe Nui had been caught by Raygo as well. It was crazy enough, but the thought that maybe Nui didn't mind it was because she was under control. She only listened to Raygo, doing the dirty work for her. Commanded to kill, to murder. She was born to be a loyal pet.

Satsuki had known the blonde for years. Ever since her birth, Nui grew up with Satsuki under their mother's iron fist. If Nui could even call Raygo her mother. She was not born from a womb, but from life-fibers. She was an experiment, and she was seemingly excelling. To be able to survive the fusion with Raygo was shocking enough.

Satsuki closed her eyes when the door to the room opened.

"Sats, it's time," She heard her sister call for her. She breathed deeply before turning, her heels clicking against the floor as she headed for the door…

… Nui broke away from the silence when the door to her cell opened. Two guards stepped in, thick chains in their hands. This immediately made her blood run cold. They were going to chain her up.

But she hadn't even done anything.

"W-Wait! Get away from me!" She hissed, pressing herself into the wall as much as she could. But there was no escape. She felt cold, metal shackles lock around her neck and torso. The clanking of the chains echoed off the walls as the guards forced her to her feet. Having not walked in days, she immediately faltered down, but was yanked up again. She coughed as the thick metal dug into her throat.

"This way, prisoner!" One guard barked, pushing her forward as she was escorted out of the cell. She stumbled into the brightly lit hallways, and continued further into the unfamiliar building.

Her blanket was abandoned in that cold, dim cell.

Finally coming upon a door, the two guards blindfolded her and undid the shackles.

She heard the door open, and was pushed inside. She stumbled on her feet, trying to catch her balance now that the weight of the chains was gone.

"Nui Harime," A booming voice caused her to gasp, forcing her to look up towards the voice. She could sense a small group in the room, much of the air was tense and filled with hatred.

"It has come to our attention that you have… done some unspeakable things," The voice spoke again, and her heart dropped. Now she understood why she was locked away. She was waiting to be prosecuted for her actions of many crimes. This must've been the Four Devas she could sense.

"… Murder of Isshin Matoi AKA Soichiro Kiryuin," She zoned back into their conversation when she heard that name. That was the whole reason why she was apart of this mess. Why mother had sent her away to find the secret weapons that man was hiding. The man that was the father of Satsuki and Ryuko. This was all her fault.

No. It wasn't.

She was a merely bred to be a slave, a pet to act once ordered.

She was never once addressed as an actual human.

In that moment, she felt her throat clog up and her heart drop…

At her silence, this only seemed to irritate the Devas more. Satsuki was silent, sitting before all of them as she watched Nui closely. The blonde was on her knees, leaned over as her hair draped down her sides and hid her face. She was acting like a human being. Someone who had been beaten and nearly starved to death. But they had done neither of those things. Yes, of course she ordered to put the blonde in a cold cell, but she offered her food and never touched her.

Unless this was a part of Nui's act.

Satsuki's hands tightened on the arms of her chair, her eyes narrowing as she examined Nui. She was showing no signs, not a single movement of attacking. It was strange indeed, but Satsuki was curious.

"Take it off," Satsuki ordered, and the big brute next to her flinched. The other three Devas all blinked at her with wide eyes. Ryuko

stared at her sister in disbelief.

"W-Wha-"

"Just get it off her," Satsuki replied again, this time her voice more demanding and cold. Without another lost moment, Gamagori moved forward and removed the piece of material from Nui's face.

What they all saw sent waves of shock through them.

Tears. Real tears were falling down her face.

Nui was crying.

Her injured eye, the massive scar cutting the middle of it was bruising with red, the once closed eye started to open slowly. Tears rolled down her cheeks, her one good eye dulled and unfocused on the floor.

Overcoming her initial shock, Satsuki settled into her chair.

"Please, leave," She replied, directed towards the Devas. They bowed and took their leave, exiting the door in the back. Ryuko was about to join them, but Satsuki stopped her.

"Sats-"

"Don't,"

Ryuko was quiet after that. Satsuki paused for another moment, turning to Nui as the girl continued to cry. She stood from her chair and walked up to the blonde. Nui's body was shivering now, a small pool of tears having formed beneath her. Leaning down, Satsuki pressed her hand underneath Nui's chin, causing the blonde to tense up and forced to look up at her. This immediately alerted Satsuki.

"S-Satsuki…" Nui sniffed, her one eye swollen red around the scar.

"Sis?" She heard Ryuko speak behind her, questioning what she was doing with the blonde. Satsuki came to a final decision… for now.

"You are released for today, Nui Harime. You will be placed back in the cell until further notice," Satsuki finally spoke, and Ryuko stared at her with wide eyes.

"You can't be serious! You said we were going to prosecu-"

"Do not deny my actions, Ryuko," Satsuki cut her off, turning towards her. Ryuko glared at her, eyed Nui again before turning away.

Satsuki stood, signaling for the guards to take Nui back to her cell. The blonde, as she was escorted away, looked back. She saw Satsuki stare at her with her cold gaze before she turned to Ryuko. Nui looked back, waking down the hallway in silence and in thought.

Was she given a second chance?

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Chapter 4

Chapter 3

That night, after Nui was released from her trial, she curled up in her usual spot, the blanket wrapped tightly around her body. She wasn't warm, but she wasn't entirely cold either. She was glad it had been provided.

As she felt herself start to fall asleep, she was shaken abruptly, and gasped out. She looked around frantically, the floor beneath rumbling.

The doors were slammed open, and two men ran in, wearing much different outfits from the usual One-Star uniforms. The clanking of the chains alerted her as the shackles were strapped around her neck and waist. The men were in a panic, breathing heavily as they forced her to her feet and ran out of the room.

"Sir! We have her!"

"Good, get to the docking ships! There are some holding cells there!" She immediately recognized one of the Devas in the hallway. Uzu Sanageyama if she could remember correctly. He wasn't dressed in a usual Goku uniform, however. He was mostly bare, wearing one of those Nudist Beach outfits.

As she was forced through the hallways, she saw other students and teachers run past them, the ground still shaking and rumbling violently.

"W-What's going on?" She finally decided to ask, but the men were silent.

Eventually, they came two double doors, and they were opened, being met with setting sunlight. This was the first real time she had

seen daylight for days, and would've felt refreshing if it didn't smell like thick dust.

Around them, the courtyard and stadium were in ruins, the ground covered in rubble and craters. Here she thought the school had been rebuilt.

It turned out the entire island was sinking. People were being escorted at the docks, in which a ship had been waiting for her specifically. As she was about to board, the men leading her were stopped by two other Devas.

"We've been told by Lady Satsuki to board Harime on her boat," Houka Inumatu, the tech-savvy Deva replied, adjusting his glasses. Like Uzu, he and the smaller Deva next to him were dressed in Nudist Beach outfits.

What did Satsuki want with her now?

She was taken to a smaller boat, and she was forced to sit on one end as her shackles were attached to rings on the floor. The two men then left her there, sitting on that small boat as they ran back onto the sinking island to help others. Her eye looked over the island, it split in places as buildings came crumbling down and streets were ripped apart. Dust and smoke were everywhere, clouding up the sunlit skies.

What was once a ruling empire was now a crumbling castle.

"Nui!" A voice, oddly familiar broke her from her thoughts. A woman, a bit smaller than her and covered in dust came running onto the boat. She immediately recognized the owner of the voice.

"Rei…" She murmured before the woman came and embraced her, ignoring the fact that she was bare. When Rei broke away, she frowned at the fact that Nui looked much different from before. Her injured eye was barely open, the filmy white underneath running red

from the scar. Dark bags were forming under her eyes, her face sunken in and her body thinner.

"What did you do to her?" Rei turned to Satsuki, who had come aboard the boat moments before. Nui noticed blood staining a part of her neck.

"We've done nothing to harm her, Hoomaru. She has simply denied our offers for care," Satsuki stated, and the dark skinned woman looked back at Nui. The blonde was looking away now, avoiding her gaze. She did have pride after all.

"Is it true?" Rei asked, but Nui stayed quiet.

"Nui, please answer!" Rei was practically begging at this point.

"Yes…" She murmured, hiding her face under her bangs. Rei didn't question her after that, but simply turned back to Satsuki.

"What will happen to her?"

"We're going to prosecute her to the full intent of the law," Satsuki replied, and Rei's eyes widened. However, she could not fight her. She had sworn under the woman's trust to be loyal to her. Even if she was loyal to the blonde, she couldn't break Satsuki's promise.

"Very well," Rei sighed before turning away from the longhaired woman.

The boats were soon off, the entire island finally at its peak as it disappeared into the ocean. Nonon had joined the boat the other three were on as Satsuki watched her empire sink.

"Are you sure about leaving your sister?" Nonon turned to Satsuki and the woman smiled.

"I can see her anytime I want to. I do not need to worry about her," Satsuki replied. Nui had stayed silent the entire time, seeing through her bangs to watch Honnoji sink in the sunset.

Suddenly, the blade that had previously wounded Satsuki in the neck shined. The sound of hair ripping broke above the boat's motor. Nonon and Rei gasped as Satsuki had used the blade to cut her long hair off. Nui looked up, but just barely to watch the tall woman release her hair into the wind.

"A parting gift for my soon-to-disappear altar mater," Satsuki spoke, watching the sunset. Nui's eye widened, her gaze traveling from the woman to the orange-glazed horizon.

She found revelation.

Satsuki hadn't taken her life yet because she wanted to prove that Nui was different.

She was leaving the past behind, and looking forward to the future.

In that moment…

As the sun disappeared behind the red sea…

Nui would prove her right…

… And everyone wrong.

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Chapter 5

The boat ride lasted through the night. Satsuki's plans to find a new home were still under way, but for the time, she decided they would house in her mother's mansion. As much as she hated the building, as it held a terrible past, she had nowhere else to go.

Her elites had announced that they would go to their own homes or futures. Nonon had asked countless times if she would be okay to leave, in which the woman replied with a curt nod and reassurance that she would be okay alone.

Now, as they traveled across the dark ocean, most of the boat's residence had gone off to sleep from the day's troubles, all except Satsuki. She watched the sleeping blonde across from her, relaxed and unmoving. Nonon and Soroi had since fallen asleep, and she thought Rei had also joined them.

"Satsuki…" A voice, barely above a whisper broke out beside her, and the shorthaired woman looked to her right. Rei was sitting up, her arms wrapped around her legs.

"What is it, Rei?" Satsuki asked calmly, and the woman rose to her feet, stumbling a bit from the boat's uneven balance. She joined the woman next to her, sitting as she watched Nui sleep.

"What's really going to happen to her?" Rei asked.

"Pardon?"

"She had done so much bad, I would've thought she would have been executed by now. It's been at least a few weeks since the final battle," Rei turned to Satsuki. The woman's eyes narrowed, staring at the blonde.

"She's different,"

"How so?"

"She is not the same Harime Nui we had all come to fear, Rei. Both you and I know that because we grew up with her. She would have tried to kill someone by now, even with the lack of arms," Satsuki replied, and Rei looked away, thinking over her words. Silence fell over them, save that of the boat's motor as it continued through the water.

"What will happen now?"

"I'll keep her from her trial as long as I can. In that time, I'm going to try to prove to everybody that she had changed, and deemed a safe person," Satsuki answered and Rei nodded.

"Thank you," Rei then said, and Satsuki blinked, looking to her. She stayed silent, but was confused.

"She's the last person I really have in this world. All I've ever known, and your willing to give us both a second chance," Rei murmured. Satsuki's gaze softened and she smiled.

"That's what nonsensical people do,"

Upon arrival to her mother's mansion, she invited her elites to stay the night, but they all refused her offer. After explanation, they said that they needed to tart making way to their own futures. After a tearful goodbye, she watched them drive away, her face stern and hard, but on the inside, she wanted to break down.

"Lady Satsuki, please, let me bandage the wound on your neck," She heard Soroi behind her, and she obliged in his offer, now coming to realize that it did hurt. The blood had since dried, but the wound itself was still open.

Nui had been escorted into the mansion alongside Rei, the bare girl overlooking her old home. Here, she had grown up with Rei and

Satsuki, although, she was much more isolated from the two so that she could be trained to kill. In that moment, she felt her blood run cold as she thought back to her past. Raygo had not treated her the same, in fact, probably more like a toy or pet than a human.

Rei had led her to a master bedroom, letting the blonde sit on the neatly tidy bed as the other woman went to go search for some clothes for her. Nui gazed around the room, feeling old memories start to come back to her.

"It's just a part of growing up, Nui. You must kill to get your way,"

"Don't fret, little one. I will make you feel so much better…"

"Nui?" Her eye snapped open when she heard Rei's voice break through her memories. Standing before her, the woman had a folded clothes in her arms.

"This is all I could find that would fit you," Rei replied, and Nui blinked. Of course, with her lack of arms, many of the outfits could not fit to her shape.

After a few minutes, with Rei's help, Nui was dressed in something a bit less revealing. A sleeveless, loose shirt and loose pants. It didn't fit her type of style at all, but she didn't care anymore. She was no longer cold, and was finally covered up.

Satsuki walked in a few moments later, dressed in a robe, her neck covered in bandages. She blinked when she saw Nui dressed in some normal clothes, but her gaze was soft, giving off no threatening vibes.

"It's best if we all get to bed. There's only a few hours left of the night, and we could all use some sleep after the day we've had," Satsuki spoke, and both woman agreed with her…

Nui lay in the bed that night, looking up at the ceiling. For all her worth, she could not sleep. She had tried, but had failed miserably. The memories from her past were starting to haunt her.

In all her life, she had never thought of them as bad. Now, she was slowly coming to realize that maybe that it was completely wrong. Raygo had always told her things that maybe weren't true. The deceased woman was mutilating, controlling, and overall, abusive.

How had she not seen it before?

Now that Raygo was gone, and Nui was freed from her grasp, she was finally coming to realize how abused she felt.

Had the other two felt this way?

In that moment, she couldn't stop her tears as they started spilling over, streaming down her cheeks. She rolled to the side, her tears staining the pillow.

Eventually, she cried herself to sleep…

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Chapter 6

Life continued as usual. A week had passed since the fall of Honnouji Academy, and Satsuki was trying to cope as much as she could. Today, from an agreement weeks before, she was going to go out in town to spend some time with Ryuko and Mako.

Standing before a mirror, she was messing with her hair, worried that it would too different from before. She wore a white blouse, a teal, waist-high dress, and as usual, heels. The wound on the side of her neck was still healing, but it no longer required a thick bound of bandages.

An awkward knock caught her attention, and she turned away from the mirror to see Nui in the doorway of her bedroom. Since they had arrived at the mansion, the blonde had been isolating herself in one of the bedrooms. Even when given some food, she only nibbled on it before leaving it. Rei was getting concerned, but knew she could not change the blonde's mind even if she tried.

Dressed in a loose button-up shirt and tights, Satsuki could tell Nui was getting distressed. Her one eye was sunken in, her cheekbones starting to become more noticeable. Satsuki hadn't seen the girl's body, but from the way she walked, she could tell that the blonde was getting thinner. She had since found an eye patch to cover her injured eye, as it was swelling up from her past injury.

"Nui? Is there something wrong?" Satsuki asked, stepping over to her. Nui hadn't shown much aggression since they started living here. She had lost her bubbly, sadistic nature, and now all was left was something along the lines of a shadow of her former self. Satsuki could stay calm around the blonde now that she showed no signs of being a threat.

"N-No…" Nui muttered, sounding more like a squeak.

"Then what is it?" Satsuki pressed, and Nui grew fidgety.

"I-I… heard you were… going out into the town…" Nui murmured and Satsuki tilted her head.

"Of course, I'm going to go see Ryuko and her friend, Mako," Satsuki replied and Nui's eye went downcast.

"I-I was wondering… if I could go…?" Nui then spoke and Satsuki's eyes widened. Her thoughts became jumbled with many different answers. Taking her out into public could cause some problems. She was thin, which made her weaker. Her body probably wouldn't handle the crowd and excitement.

Secondly, Ryuko and everybody else were still very weary of the blonde. Unlike herself, they had not lived with Nui for the past week, so they wouldn't know of her type of behavior.

Third of all, her arms were still gone. People would surely stare and get suspicious.

Biting her lip, her eyes shot around the room for another moment before she let out a sigh and gave in.

"Yeah, you can come," She spoke, and Nui's interest had perked by a notch. She blinked with surprise, not expecting Satsuki to allow her to go into public.

"But first, we need to get you changed into something a bit more appealing," Satsuki then said and Nui nodded with agreement.

After a few minutes of searching through the clutter of clothes the home had to offer, Satsuki had found something mildly suitable for Nui. The blonde stood a few feet back, watching her curiously.

Walking out of the closet, the older girl walked over to the blonde with clothes in her arms.

"This should help hide your arms," Satsuki spoke, bringing up a thick poncho. The rest of the outfit consisted tight, black jeans, and a white, sleeveless shirt. Nui smiled softly, her one eye glazed over.

"Thank you, Satsuki…"

Ryuko and Mako patiently waited near a cafe, Mako having ordered a small meal while Ryuko sipped at coffee while looking out for her sister. Her eyes caught on a taller woman, and she immediately knew who it was.

"There she is," Ryuko sat up from the table, causing Mao to stop mid-bite.

"W-Waif! Lemmfe fifish thif!" Mako tried calling to her friend, but failed. Ryuko walked through the small crowd, making her way towards her sister when she noticed someone walking with her. Her skin prickled at the sight.

"Why the hell is she here?" Ryuko asked once her sister was in earshot. Satsuki stopped while Nui took her stance behind the woman, not wanting to take any chances with the younger sibling.

"She asked if she could go, and I let her," Satsuki countered with a calm voice, and Ryuko growled.

"Besides, she is no harm to any of us, considering I'm not dead yet," Satsuki spoke again, and Ryuko narrowed her eyes but saw that the sibling had a point. If Nui were truly a threat, then she would've tried to kill Satsuki by now.

"Fine! Doesn't mean I won't keep my eye on her!" Ryuko hissed before turning away, going back towards the frantically eating Mako. When she was gone, Satsuki turned to the blonde.

"You okay?" Satsuki asked, and Nui nodded hastily.

"I-I think so…" She shivered. Nui was in no condition to stand up to Ryuko, even if she wanted to physically harm her. She was still very skittish.

"Don't worry, she's just being a brat," Satsuki smiled softly before walking towards the other two, Nui in tow…

Their day went on accordingly. They stopped at many different shops, buying assorted things, especially Mako. Her small backpack looked as if it were to burst with the amount of items she had stuffed inside it. It was a wonder at how it hadn't yet.

Ryuko would glance at Nui every once in a while, but because her sister was always between her and the blonde, she couldn't stare. Her trust for the blonde was still low, after what she had done to their father.

"Ryuko, stairs!" Satsuki yelled, and the younger sibling reacted quickly enough to avoid tripping down a long staircase. She swung herself around, facing the other three with a sigh of relief. Mako was by her side, bombarding her with a million questions while her sister narrowed her eyes and glared at her. Behind her, Nui was hidden, a part of her head sticking out to see what was happening. Ryuko sneered before putting her attention back onto Mako, reassuring the brunette that she was fine.

By the end of their day, Nui was completely exhausted. After the small scuffle on the staircase, Satsuki's former Elite 4, which she insisted that they were now her friends, had encountered the group. Among sight of her, she felt the air grow intense and uncomfortable. Nonetheless, Satsuki had defended her again, saying that she wasn't a threat.

Afterward, it had been revealed that the largest member of the four, Gamagori, had proposed a date to Mako, in which she agreed happily, much to his embarrassment.

Satsuki, sided with Ryuko watched on as the Elites continued to congratulate the new couple.

"It's been a week since everything happened… and their already starting to settle down," Ryuko spoke, and Satsuki blinked. Nui listened in on the conversation, watching intently.

"The war is over, Ryuko. They have no need to be protective of themselves or me anymore. They can start living out their lives like normal people," Satsuki replied, and the younger sister looked to her before smiling and looking back.

"Can't argue with you on that one," Ryuko sighed, placing her hands into her pockets…

Nui thought over the conversation, laying flat on her bed as she looked up at the ceiling. She had secluded herself to her bedroom again, since Ryuko had been invited to stay the night. Wanting to avoid her at all costs, Nui had disappeared and now lay on her bed.

The mere exchange of the two sisters sent an oddly familiar chill up her spine.

Jealousy.

Now that she was realizing her past, Nui yearned for some actual love, unconditional and truthful. Not full of lies and harmful.

A knock on her door caused her to stir and she rose up a bit to see the door open. Rei stepped through, a bright smile on her lips.

"Nui, please come with me. Satsuki wants to talk with you," She spoke, and the blonde obliged. Sitting up, she rose from her bed and followed the older woman out of the room and down the long hallway.

Coming upon the living room, she saw Ryuko in a chair while Satsuki sat across from her on the couch. Ryuko was eyeing her while Satsuki sipped at a cup of tea made by Soroi.

Sitting in a chair next to the two sisters, Ryuko scoffed before paying attention to something else. Satsuki settled the cup in her lap before looking at the blonde.

"Nui, we've been talking for a bit…"

"Y-Yeah?"

"… And we were thinking… that maybe you would like to get your arms back?" Satsuki proposed and a jolt of shock went through the blonde's body. She was in silence, her mouth gapped as she looked at the older girl.

"M-My arms?" She asked.

"Yes, your arms! Be lucky that I'm agreeing to this!" Ryuko snapped at her.

" *Ryuko*," Satsuki looked at her, her voice and tone hard. Ryuko let out a growl before turning away again.

"B-But how?" Nui inquired and Satsuki smiled.

"There are ways, trust me," Satsuki replied and Nui's eye widened.

Trust me.

That single phrase made her body shiver.

Satsuki had complete trust in her. Honest to god *trust.*

Nui's expression slowly changed into a small smile, her eye glazing over as tears starting to sting at the corners.

"Thank you… so much for this, for everything," Nui bowed her head. Satsuki dipped her head in response while Ryuko stayed quiet.

Walking back to her bedroom with Rei, the older woman bowed in her presence before making her leave, closing the door behind her. Nui laid back down into the bed, looking back at the ceiling as she smiled. Tears finally fell, but for once, they were not solemn tears but instead joyful.

That night, Nui experienced no nightmares…

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Chapter 7

Preparation had gone on for a week. To create arms to fit Nui's body was challenging, especially since Life-Fibers were harder to come by. However, after that week, Iori had called Satsuki, telling her that it was a success and ready to go.

Nui had been excited since she was told. She could do more things with arms than without them.

However, a thought had lingered in her mind as the days ticked closer to her surgery. She would be normal again, yes. But was she even normal to begin with?

She sat on the edge of the bed, zoned out as her eyes gazed at the floor. Could she… be treated like an actual person? If Satsuki had enough trust in her, than certainly the others would gain trust in her.

Ryuko was the only one that refused to accept her trust. Glares and twisted glances at her told her otherwise.

The doors to the room opened suddenly, Rei appearing.

"It's time, Nui," She replied and the blonde smiled softly. She rose from the bed and followed the woman out into the looming hallways.

She followed her until they reached a room on the other side of the mansion. Opening the door, they came upon Satsuki and Ryuko, sided with the blonde scientist, Iori.

"Are you ready?" Satsuki stepped forward, while Ryuko looked away, refusing to look her away.

Nui nodded with mere excitement, and Satsuki smiled.

"Very well. Iori," Satsuki turned to him, and he nodded before leading her into the next room over.

Switched out into a medical gown, Iori had her lay down on a flat table, a light above it to help him see.

"We're going to sedate you to avoid any pain," Iori commented before bringing out a needle. She blinked, staying silent before he brought the needle down, entering it into the inner bend of her arm. She didn't wince, having not felt the small prick. He attached a small tube to the needle before applying a syringe into the tube, allowing whatever medication inside to take affect on her.

Within a few seconds, she felt herself start to grow drowsy, her eyes growing heavy before she finally lost consciousness.

Seeing that she was completely out, the scientist went back to his tray of tools, picking up a small capsule that held glowing, red thread.

Inside the room before them, Ryuko's eyes went downcast when she saw him pick up the thread. Unbeknownst to Nui, the whole idea of giving her arms back would only work if given a thread that alive and foreign. Being a hybrid of the thread, Ryuko unwillingly gave away a piece to allow the surgery to be possible. A faint pulse traveled up her arm, reminding her of the closed cut on her wrist.

Satsuki noticed Ryuko tense and placed a hand on top of hers.

"Everything will be fine," She reassured but Ryuko let out a hiss.

"You know damn well I'm doing this for you. I wouldn't help her in a million years," She growled, only causing Satsuki to sigh before looking back at the operation table…

She regained consciousness maybe a few hours later. She couldn't tell. All she could feel was numbness, and faint pain. She blinked a few times, her senses coming to her as she started to take in her surroundings. She was back in her bedroom, set in bed with the covers over her.

Suddenly, she felt something familiar running down her shoulder. Blinking away her last remaining drowsiness, she lifted a hand. It took her a few good seconds before realization hit her. Her eye widened with shock and relief, and she looked to her other arm, looking over her hands.

Her arms were thin, lacking muscle, her fingers stick-like.

It took some struggle, but she could feel things, she could touch things. Shivering, she grabbed the covers and draped them off her, feeling the material between her fingers with wonder.

She was given a second chance, and they did everything to give it to her.

She wanted to cry in joy, in relief.

"R-Rei!" She called for the woman, and within a few moments, she ran through the doors, alert and confused.

"Nui, I heard you call, is something the matter-" Rei didn't have time to finish before the blonde embraced her tightly, crying into her shoulder.

"N-Nui? What's wrong?"

"There's nothing wrong… I-I'm happy!" She announced and Rei blinked.

"Y-You mean your-"

"M-My arms, yes," Nui nodded, tears trailing down her cheeks as she smiled brightly. Rei had never seen the blonde smile like this, a genuine and true smile.

"Come on, Satuki has been waiting for you to awaken," Rei replied, before leading her out and down the hallway.

Satsuki and Ryuko were in the living room, Satsuki sipping at tea while Ryuko ate her provided lunch. Ryuko had decided to stay for another week, feeling that it would be necessary to visit with her sister as much as she could. Mako and her family understood and told her to come back whenever she felt like it.

A pulse traveled up her arm, reminding her of her cut, and the fact that she had helped a former enemy. The mere thought made her skin prickle and she ate her food aggressively.

"Thinking about her again?" Satsuki could sense quite easily when her sibling was angry or tense.

"I can't help it, sis. I helped out an enemy, and I feel like I did the wrong thing,"

"Nui isn't what she used to be. She's changed, Ryuko," Satsuki spoke and Ryuko sighed.

"I know, but I just don't have any trust in her. Something about her makes me tense," Ryuko murmured, going back to her lunch.

"You'll grow to trust her," Satsuki replied before taking another sip of her tea.

The pounding footsteps grew louder, alerting both girls as Satsuki placed her cup down on the table and rose quickly. Suddenly, Rei and Nui appeared around the corner and both sisters gazed at the blonde. Scarring had formed at the bases where the arms were attached to her shoulders, but it seemed that she could control them easily.

"Nui… U-Um… How do you feel?" Satsuki asked, and the blonde cupped her hands together, smiling.

"I feel amazing," Nui replied and Ryuko snorted and looked away.

"It's nice to hear that your arms have healed nicely, and it seems that you can use them quite well," Satsuki spoke and Nui nodded before stepping forward and embracing the older girl. Satsuki froze, and Ryuko and Rei both gapped in surprise.

"Thank you… so much for giving me this much opportunity. You're the only one that believed in me when no one else did," Nui murmured softly, her eyes closed. Satsuki blinked a few more times before relaxing and wrapping her arms around the girl hesitantly.

They broke apart moments later, leaving Rei to simply blink and Ryuko sneering at the blonde. Nui looked over to Ryuko, and she tensed up, having a feeling what was coming.

"W-Wait no you don't have to-" Ryuko stammered but got caught in the blonde's embrace anyway. She tensed up, looking over at Satsuki with pleading eyes. The older sister simply gazed at her with amusement. Nui broke away suddenly, and smiled at Ryuko.

"I wouldn't have my arms back without you," Nui replied sweetly, before turning. Ryuko narrowed her eyes, her hand rubbing over the cut on her wrist.

"Nui, if you'd like, you can join us for dinner tonight," Satsuki then said and Ryuko glared at her.

"I'd like that very much so," Nui agreed, leaving Ryuko to sigh with irritation with her sister. She was doing everything in her power to piss off the sibling, as well as to try to bond with Nui to prove her views wrong.

"We'll see you tonight then," Satsuki dipped her head. Both Rei and Nui bowed in respect before taking their leave. Satsuki turned back to her sister, the sibling still glaring at her with narrowed eyes and a sneer.

"I cannot believe you sometimes," Ryuko hissed and Satsuki chuckled.

"Just give her a chance, Ryuko. All you've known her for is her former self, you've never explored into her new personality," Satsuki replied. Ryuko sighed with defeat, her head lowering.

"Alright, I'll try,"

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